

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 589

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

CNO WASHDC

CINCUSNAVEUR

CINCLANT

CINCLANTFLT

USS ALBANY

USS CALIFORNIA

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E.O. 11652: NXA

TAGS:MNUC, MARR, OCLR, NO

SUBJ: NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON US CRUSIERS SUBJECT OF NORWEGIAN
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE AND PRESS SPECULATION

SUMMARY: LEFT WING PARLIAMENTARIAN HAS SUGGESTED US CRUISERS
CARRIED NUCLEAR WEAPONS DURING RECENT VISITS TO OSLO.
MINISTER OF DEFENSE ISSUED STRONG RESPONSE AS SUBJECT RECEIVED
GENEROUS AIRING IN PRESS. LEFT WING OPPOSITION ELEMENTS
LIKELY TO RAISE ISSUE AGAIN DURING FALL SESSION OF
PARLIAMENT. END SUMMARY.

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1. IN WAKE OF SUCCESSFUL PORT VISITS TO OSLO BY

USS CALIFORNIA (OCT 8-13) AND USS ALBANY (OCT 13-16), MEMBER OF EXTREME LEFT WING SOCIALIST LEFT PARTY, ARENT HENDRIKSEN, RAISED QUESTION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON VISITING US WARSHIPS IN NORWEGIAN PARLIAMENT OCTOBER 15. DURING PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD. HENDRIKSEN SUGGESTED US CRUSIERS CALIFORNIA AND ALBANY HAD NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON BOARD DURING THEIR RECENT VISIT TO OSLO, ASKED MINISTER OF DEFENSE FOSTERVOLL TO CONFIRM OR DENY THIS AND FURTHER QUESTIONED WHETHER NORWEGIAN NUCLEAR POLICY--NO NUCLEAR WEAPONS STATIONED ON NORWEGIAN TERRITORY IN PEACETIME--HAD BEEN VIOLATED. HENRIKSEN ALSO QUOTED STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO "AN AMERICAN ADMIRAL" THAT VESSELS CAPABLE OF CARRYING NUCLEAR MISSILES DO NOT UNLOAD THEM WHEN VISITING FOREIGN PORTS.

2. IN RESPONSE, MINISTER OF DEFENSE FOSTERVOLL EMPHASIZED THAT ALL SHIP VISITS FROM ALLIED AND OTHER NATIONS ARE CLEARED THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS BEFORE-HAND. HE ADDED THAT OTHER NATIONS ARE WELL AWARE OF NORWAY'S NUCLEAR POLICY, THAT THEY RESPECT THIS POLICY AND DO NOT BRING NUCLEAR WEAPONS WITH THEM WHEN THEY COME TO NORWAY. FOSTERVOLL DECLARED THAT NORWAY ASKS THAT THEY NOT CARRY NUCLEAR WEAPONS WITH THEM AND ASSUMES THEY RESPECT THIS REQUEST. HE ADDED THE USEFUL BUT POLITICALLY CONTROVERSIAL INTERPRETATION THAT EVEN IF THEY DID HAVE NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON BOARD,THIS SHOULD IN NO WAY BE A VIOLATION OF NORWEGIAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS POLICY.

3. NORWAY'S LARGEST DAILY, CONSERVATIVELY-ORIENTED -AFTENPOSTEN", CARRIED BRIEF FACTUAL REPORT OF PARLIAMENTARY EXCHANGE UNDER HEADLINE "NO GROUNDS FOR SOCIALIST LEFT ASSERTION THAT NUCLEAR POLICY IS VIOLATED." HOWEVER, SENSATIONALIST DAILY "DAGBLADET" HEADLINED "IN VIOLATION OF NORWEGIAN NUCLEAR POLICY--NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN NORWEGIAN HARBOR" WITH SUBTITLE "CALIFORNIA AND ALBANY CARRY MISSILES SYSTEMS INTENDED FOR NUCLEAR WARHEADS." DAGBLADET STRONGLY PLAYED UP THEME THAT SHIPS APPARENTLY HAD NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BOARD BASING THEIR CONCLUSION ON REPORTS FROM TWO MEMBERS OF LEFTIST PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE OSLO (PRIO) WHO TOURED ALBANY DURING PUBLIC VISITING HOURS. PRIO ASSOCIATES CLAIMED TO HAVE QUERIED OFFICER ON SHIP WHO ALLEGEDLY CONFIRMED THAT VESSEL CARRIED NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND THAT "THERE WERE 33 SPECIAL MARINES ON BOARD ASSIGNED TO GUARD THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS." ONE PRIO ASSOCIATE REFERRED TO ALLEGED STATEMENT BY

ADMIRAL GENE LA ROCQUE MADE IN CONNECTION WITH JAPANESE NAVAL VISIT THAT "EVERY VESSEL CAPABLE OF TRANSPORTING NUCLEAR WEAPONS DOES SO; THEY ARE NOT UNLOADED BEFORE ENTERING FOREIGN PORTS." ACCOUNT THEN DESCRIBED MISSILE SYSTEMS WITH WHICH ALBANY IS EQUIPPED, DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF NUCLEAR WARHEADS AND VAST DAMAGE THAT WOULD OCCUR SHOULD VESSEL EXPLODE IN OSLO HARBOR.

4. DAGBLADET CARRIED FOLLOW-UP STORY OCT 17 AUTHORED BY SVERRE LODGAARD, ONE OF THE TWO PRIO VISITORS TO ALBANY, WHICH REPRESENTS DE FACTO RETRACTION OF PREVIOUS DAY'S CATEGORIC STATEMENT RE PRESENCE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. OPERATIVE PHASE READS "ON THE BASIS OF WHAT IS COMMONLY KNOWN ABOUT THESE SHIPS AND THE PROCEDURES FOLLOWED BY THEM ON THEIR NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS, IT IS PROBABLE (UNDERLINED IN ARTICLE) THAT THE SHIPS CARRIED NUCLEAR WARHEADS. ASROC HAS BEEN INSTALLED ON BOTH SHIPS."

5. COMMENT: LEFT WING SPECULATION OVER PRESENCE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON BOARD NUCLEAR/VESSELS IS NOT SURPRISING AS THESE ANTI-NATO, ANTI-US ELEMENTS WERE EFFECTIVELY FRUSTRATED IN EFFORTS TO BLOW UP NUCLEAR PROPULSION ISSUE. STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF DEFENSE FOSTERVOLL WAS FIRM, UNEQUIVOCAL AND DESIGNED TO CLOSE OFF FURTHER DEBATE ON ISSUE. WE DOUBT IF HE ACCOMPLISHED THIS AS THE SOCIALIST LEFT CAN BE EXPECTED TO EXPLOIT EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO EMBARRASS NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT. MORE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE HEARD ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS ISSUE DURING UPCOMING PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON FOREIGN POLICY AND THE THRONE SPEECH. EMBASSY RESPONDING TO QUERIES ON IF-ASKED BASIS WITH SIMPLE STATEMENT OF OUR LONG STANDING POLICY TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NEITHER CONFIRM NO DENY PRESENCE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON US WARSHIPS.
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